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Pick-up/Drop-off Area for ITD Micrographics Moves

Donna Smith

The Micrographic's pick-up/drop-off area has moved to the ITD Production Control area in the basement of the Department of Transportation Building. The move will provide a more secure area for our customers' information.

ITD sent a letter to department coordinators requesting a list of employees who are authorized to pick up microfilm materials (films, documents, microfiche, CD's, etc). If you did not receive a letter and will have microfilm materials to pick up, please notify us with the name of the employee(s) and the material they will be allowed to pick up, such as reports, tapes, cartridges, and microfilm.

If you have any questions regarding the new pick-up/drop-off location, contact Sharilyn Martel at smartel@state.nd.us or (701) 328-2530 or Donna Smith at dsmith@state.nd.us or (701) 328-2531.

E-government In North Dakota

Vern Welder

E-Government Advisory Committee Established

The Information Technology Department (ITD) has established an E-Government Advisory Committee that consists of agency representatives who will review issues surrounding electronic government. Issues discussed include web application look and feel, pricing models, advertising, and privacy policies. The group meets quarterly and acts as a sounding board for new e-government initiatives such as the DiscoverND.com portal.

DiscoverND Portal Makes Navigation Easier

If you have visited the North Dakota home page lately, you probably noticed a significant change. The page has been re-designed to make it easier to navigate and to find the information you need. The portal name, DiscoverND.com, was selected through a contest sponsored by ITD in January. The current State of North Dakota home page URL <http://www.state.nd.us> will be retained and will address the portal as well.

E-Government Current Applications

The ITD electronic government team (e-team) is working hard to create applications that provide North Dakota services to citizens and state agencies through the Web. Click on 'Online Government' on the North Dakota portal (DiscoverND.com) to see a list of e-government applications. Agencies that provide government services through the Web can have links to their applications included on the electronic government list. To request a link on the electronic government page, contact Marlys Jangula at 328-3198 or mjangula@state.nd.us. The E-Government Advisory Committee may provide input on granting or denying the requests.

Statistics on State Web Server Activity

Vern Welder

The Information Technology Department hosts a WebTrends site that shows the North Dakota State web server's activity statistics. The URL is http://www.state.nd.us/_usage/. Select the top directory in the list named with the year and month. The WebTrends site displays graphical and textual information regarding site usage. It is interesting to scroll through this site's statistics to see how the State web site is being used.



Oracle Master License Agreement Benefits State Agencies

Dan Sipes

The Information Technology Department recently entered into a master license agreement with Oracle Corporation for Oracle software purchased by state agencies. This allows state agencies to purchase selected Oracle software at discounted prices. Agencies should coordinate any Oracle purchases or maintenance payments with ITD to determine if they can take advantage of the master license agreement. Please direct questions about this agreement to me at 328-4317.



Game and Fish Web Licensing Project



The following e-mail message from Paul Schadewald of the ND Game and Fish Department to Curt Wolfe and Vern Welder at ITD shows the potential of using the Web for State Government.

Just a note to let you know that our web licensing project is going very well. April and May have been good test months. We will be making some minor changes to make the system even better. We have sold licenses to about 1,200 customers with few problems. Most of the licenses (about 85%) have been sold to residents. We expect to have a much higher level of use this fall, with a lot of both residents and nonresidents purchasing hunting licenses. Most of our traffic now is for fishing licenses. While the dollar volume has been about \$10,000 per month for the first two months, we expect it to be many times this in the fall.

As the word gets out, the system will see more use. Each year we will see more customers using it. My hope is that 2001 will be our first \$1 million dollar year. It may grow slower than this, but I don't think so. For your info, it took us three years for telephone sales to hit \$1 million - with a service charge of \$10 for nonresident hunting licenses and \$4 for residents.

Your team has been great to work with. We like working with them and look forward to building more successful projects with them.

Paul Schadewald

Testing Video Conferencing Systems

Jim Gaarder

ITD has been working with vendors and some state agencies on testing and piloting various aspects of video conferencing. We have piloted and tested switched video, bridged small conference video equipment into the IVN dedicated network, and worked with the University System in testing video over IP with desktop units, as well as conference room units.

If we have learned anything from this experience, "Plug and Play" is not a phrase that should be used with any type of video conferencing. We have heard this from many vendors, but the reality is, it's not that simple. Switched video or video over ISDN(dialup) has come a long way in the last three years.

Video over dedicated circuits has been used in many applications for several years, the IVN network is an excellent example. However, each of these solutions requires installing a circuit specifically for that video location.

Video over IP on the other hand is supposed to run over an existing IP network. The State's IP network, better known as the NDIN network, is used by state agencies for voice-mail, data processing, and data inquiry. For NDIN to be used for good quality video, many changes need to be made in the network. In some cases, new routers need to be installed or a switch needs to be added. There is no such thing as "Plug and Play."

As you may know, ITD issued a RFP for a new ATM network for State Government, the University System, K-12, and local governments. The ATM network will address some of the problems inherent in doing video over IP. Once the new network is installed, video over IP will be more available and the need will greatly increase.



ITD EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Rob Gall

Job Title: IT Business Analyst

Section of ITD: IT Planning Division

Job Responsibilities: Strategic business and technology planning, project management, business process re-engineering.

Years at ITD: Started with ITD in August 1998, 5 years in North Dakota State Government.

Projected Service Rates Are Available

Dan Sipes

The Information Technology Department has projected service rates for the 2001-2003 biennium. The rates can be found on the ITD web site (<http://www.state.nd.us/itd>). Select the 'Administration' link and then the 'Rates' link to view a current listing of all ITD billing rates. Select the 'Budget Guidelines for 2001-2003 Biennium' to go to the new budget rates. If you have any questions, contact me at 328-4317 or Mike Ressler at 328-1001.

Proactive Approach to Server Administration

Lynette Goroski

Due to the increasing number of systems and production servers to manage, ITD has taken a more proactive approach to server administration. ITD has implemented a product called Compaq Insight Manager that allows monitoring of desktop and server hardware.

The Compaq Insight Management software has a client/server architecture and is composed of agent software, Compaq Management Agents, and the management application software, Compaq Insight Manager.

Compaq Management Agents

Management Agents operate on systems such as servers and workstations, performing in-depth monitoring of the system's state by collecting and measuring over 1000 system parameters. These parameters indicate the current state of subsystems by counting the occurrence of particular events such as the number of read operations performed on a disk drive or whether the cooling fan is operating.

Compaq Desktop Agents operate on Compaq Deskpro computers or Compaq portable computers, monitoring functions that include temperature sensing and disk pre-failure alerting.

Management Agents provide information to management applications such as Compaq Insight Manager and generate alarm notifications if changes occur in the fault or performance aspects of system operations. Information is delivered to and from the Compaq Management Agents by the industry-standard Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP).

Compaq Insight Manager

Compaq Insight Manager is the Compaq application for managing network desktops and servers. Insight Manager delivers intelligent monitoring and alerting as well as visual control of Compaq servers and desktops.

Compaq Insight Manager includes the following features:

- Provides comprehensive fault management for all major subsystems, including pre-failure alerting for disks, memory, and Pentium Pro processors.
- Allows you to set performance and capacity thresholds for management variables related to CPU and bus utilization, NIC throughput, and logical disk capacity.
- Allows you to gather historic performance information for graphing or export purposes.
- Allows you to export asset information from the Compaq Insight Manager database to spreadsheet and database applications making asset management easier.

For more information on Compaq Systems Management, visit <http://www.compaq.com/products/servers/management>.

Frequently Asked Questions from IT Coordinators

Cindy Kemmet

I am frequently asked questions concerning the role of IT coordinators and what it means to be on the Information Technology Department's list of authorized IT coordinators. I would like to take a moment to review the roles and responsibilities of IT coordinators and discuss some changes that will be coming in the very near future.

Why is ITD's IT coordinators list necessary or important to me?

The first issue to understand is that North Dakota Century Code Section 54-59-10 mandates that all agencies appoint an IT coordinator.

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All requests for information technology services from ITD must be authorized by an agency information technology coordinator.

This is for your protection and ours, it ensures that only authorized IT coordinators from your agency can request services from ITD. For example, some of the requests made by agencies may involve the expenditure of funds; the addition or removal of network equipment; and changes to security settings, e-mail accounts, IP Addressing and phone installations. Therefore, ITD will not process any work requests that are not submitted or signed by the agency's authorized IT coordinator.

What about telephone coordinators?

ITD's IT coordinators list no longer makes the distinction between data processing coordinators and telephone coordinators. They were combined and are now referred to as IT coordinators.



What is the difference between a lead IT coordinator and IT coordinator?

First, the lead IT coordinator in each agency can only be designated by that agency's director or other authorized individual. Once a lead IT coordinator is established, (there can be more than one lead listed) their name is placed on ITD's authorized IT coordinators list as a lead coordinator for that agency.

NOTE: Only a lead IT coordinator can request to have other staff within their office added or deleted as additional IT coordinators for their agency.

As an IT coordinator for my agency, how do I formally request information technology services?

Requests for technology services can be requested by:

1. Manually filling out an official ITD form, obtaining an approval signature at the bottom, and submitting to ITD.
2. Accessing ITD's home page via the Web and choosing the 'Service Requests' link. Here you will find online service request forms we have successfully converted from paper to Web-based forms.
3. Accessing ITD's Mainframe system and filling out a work request through the Data Processing Work Request system. This method is used almost exclusively for Application Development requests.

ITD is working to make as many of our service request forms available via the Web as possible, however paper forms will continue to exist as we work to provide web-based solutions. Thank you for your patience!

If I am listed as an IT coordinator for my agency, do I have authorization to fill out and request any IT services from ITD ?

Before I answer this question, please note that in agencies with multiple IT coordinators, each is usually responsible for a specific area. For example, in an agency where there are five IT coordinators, one or two may request all the application development services, while the others request telecommunication services. In agencies with one or two IT coordinators, they are responsible for all areas of information service requests.

Paper ITD State forms: ITD will process the request as long as it is signed by an authorized IT coordinator from your agency.

Web-based service request forms: **Does not** allow access to all IT coordinators. The Web-based system requires a user id and password. Only a lead IT coordinator from your agency can authorize you to have access to these forms. Once the lead IT coordinator grants you access, ITD will furnish you with a user id and password.

Mainframe Work Request System for application development services: **Does not** allow access to all IT coordinators. The lead IT coordinator from your agency must authorize you to have access to this application through the Supersession main menu.

As an IT Coordinator for my agency, can I just make a phone call to ITD to request services?

This is a simple "no." Forms submitted to us, either online or on paper, give us a record of your request and eliminates any questions or concerns as to what is being requested and who is requesting it. This protects you and ITD against any unauthorized requests.

What about e-mail messages I receive from ITD that are addressed to Grp-ITD-Coordination and, at times, they don't pertain to me?

ITD has 160 separate agencies with over 500 IT coordinators listed in our IT coordinators database. When ITD needs to share information with our customers we use e-mail distribution lists as one method of communication. As an IT coordinator, you are the main contact or liaison between ITD and your agency. It becomes your responsibility as an IT coordinator to ensure that service-affecting or critical need-to-know information is distributed to those employees in your office that are affected. Although there may be instances where the information does not directly affect you or your office, it is important that all IT coordinators are kept equally informed and updated.

A New IT Coordinator Database is Coming in July!

ITD is currently developing a new web-enabled IT coordinator database system. The new system will give designated lead IT coordinators in each agency the access and ability to manage the assignment of adding or deleting other staff in your office as IT coordinators. Most importantly, the new system will allow you to set specific security rights for each individual IT coordinator in your agency.



The web-based service requests accessed through ITD's home page are also being re-designed. This new system will allow lead IT coordinators to streamline the process of managing the role other IT coordinators have in requesting information technology services from ITD. More information will be distributed when the new system is ready for production.

If you have any questions related to IT coordinators, please contact me at 701-328-3003 or ckemmet@state.nd.us

The Power of Electronic Forms

Bill Roach

Over the years, we have worked diligently to optimize our business applications in an attempt to process increasing amounts of information at a faster pace. However, we have done almost nothing to increase the efficiency or accuracy of our primary information gathering process, forms. Industry analysts estimate that 80% of all information enters systems via forms. Yet it is one of the most inefficient processes in the entire work cycle.

The reason can be explained in a single word, paper. Paper has been the medium of choice for data collection for the past few hundred years. We all know how inefficient the paper-based information collection process can be. Information can be difficult to read, in the wrong place, or required fields may be incomplete. Our math skills are highly suspect and no one ever reads the instructions. The collected data is worthless until someone physically keys the data into a computer system. Is there a better way?

The answer is yes, and no, and yes. Properly deployed, electronic forms (e-forms) can provide tremendous benefits. In his book, "Business @ The Speed of Thought," Bill Gates uses the example of a paper form that requires \$160.00 to process in paper costs only \$5.00 when it is done electronically. Dramatic savings are realized when it is done right. However, it is not as simple as it might appear.

Developing (e-forms) is a process. One of the forms industry experts, Bill Hill, CFC, CFSP, promotes a five step progression plan to harness the power of e-forms.

1. Print and complete by hand (PDF for example).
2. Complete, print, and then process by hand (PDF-Acrobat 4.0).
3. Complete, fill or pull from a database, and print or store data (E-forms software).
4. Complete, fill or pull from a database, transport the data electronically to another location, and print or store form (E-forms filler).
5. Same as 4 plus electronic signature. (Entrust, Verisign, PenOp).

Increasing levels of automation are added as the organization adapts to the previous level and as additional software tools are made available.

Numerous products are available on the market today that support some of the automation levels identified above. Only a handful of products have the industrial strength to support all levels. The trick is determining what level of functionality you want early in the process. If you require live calculations, instant back-end database validation, cross platform accessibility, autofill, data off-loading, zero client administration, and support for digital signatures, you would be wise to select a product that can do all of the functions rather than starting with a package that will only get you half way there.

Don't forget that e-forms are only a part of the solution. We should expect that paper forms will be around for the foreseeable future. But, we don't have to keep doing the same old data entry to make the information accessible. Forms processing software is capable of extracting information from even unstructured documents. Machine print, hand print, barcode, and mark sense technologies can extract, evaluate, and validate just about any kind of information, even unstructured documents. Granted, someone may have to validate the most difficult characters, but the effort is minimal compared to direct entry from paper. After processing, e-forms or images of paper forms can be ported to an electronic filing system.

With the ever increasing demand for information, e-forms and forms processing offer significant advantages to our traditional paper processes. Used correctly, the technology will give us more accurate information, faster, and at a lower cost.

Successful ROSCOE toTSO Conversion

Vern Welder

ITD has discontinued the use of Computer Associates' ROSCOE software as our mainframe text editor as of May 17, 2000. We are now using IBM's TSO product. This was a major change for our software development staff because we had been using ROSCOE for over 20 years. The conversion went quite well with little disruption of customer service.

The Future of Electronic Learning

Rob Gall

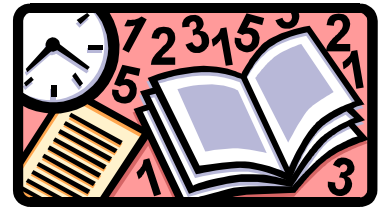
Recently, I had the opportunity to attend a conference titled, "Telecommunications Technology in North Dakota". Highlighting the conference were keynote presentations by two visionaries in the information and telecommunications industries: Gene Hoffman, the 24-year-old founder of Emusic.com, and John Zeglis, Chairman and CEO of AT&T Wireless. Both gentlemen provided insights into the wireless industry and its' role in providing rural America with the tools needed to compete in the information age.

The conference also included a number of workshops featuring regional and national leaders who discussed the latest trends and technological advances in e-business, education, and health care. Of particular interest to me was the workshop titled, "Education and Technology in Action: Winning Classroom Ideas".

My past experiences with electronic learning have left very unfavorable impressions and as I read the workshop's sub-title, "A showcase of innovative uses of technology in the classroom", I found myself quickly becoming skeptical. Armed with an arsenal of derogatory remarks and arms crossed conveying my negative aura, I found a seat at the workshop and prepared to struggle through an hour of boredom. I'm not from Missouri, but "show me" anyway.

Life is a never-ending learning process that begins the day we are born. The experience of life itself is an education that is fostered or enhanced by a period of formal education.

In our fast-paced society, finding time to accommodate traditional learning programs has become increasingly difficult. One response to this fast-paced quest for knowledge has been accelerated learning programs where individuals embark on crash-courses of information presented in a traditional format. A second alternative that is rapidly changing the face of education is electronic facilitated learning.



I knew electronic learning offered advantages, but had not experienced them and tended to let the perceived disadvantages cloud its' true potential. Again, I said, "show me," and show me they did.

Prior to the session's start I quickly jotted down several weaknesses I perceived to exist with electronic learning: inability to interact, no "live" class discussion, losing student individuality and participation, etc. I am pleased to say that the workshop was very enlightening. In fact, mere words alone can not convey the total impression I experienced. Rather than attempt to summarize the workshop, my sole message is of encouragement. Though many of you have already done so, my encouragement is to see for yourself what others are experiencing.

As one example of thousands, check out <http://www.scholastic.com> and witness not only the learning tools available, but also the professional resources offered to educators. When time permits and to the credit of one of the presenters, David Wallace, check out Baxter School's (Baxter, Kansas) site at <http://www.baxter508.k12.ks.us>. I'm confident you won't be disappointed.

Then stop for a minute and ponder the implications electronic learning will have on society. From my perspective, I believe the opportunities presented are staggering and better yet, they exist today.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Update

Vern Welder

The Convergent Group's GIS study report was delivered in April and an overview of the report was presented to the ND GIS Advisory Committee and to the Interim Legislative IT Committee.

The GIS study report's main recommendation is for ITD to host a GIS hub that would be a repository of GIS databases now housed by various state agencies. A GIS hub would provide automation to support both the publishing of various departmental data sets and the extraction of data from the hub for use in various departmental GIS systems.

The ND GIS Advisory Committee supports the GIS hub concept and has recommended that ITD request funding for a GIS hub in the next legislative session. In the interim, the committee will publish an inventory of GIS databases available from state agencies.



ITD Executive Management

Curtis Wolfe, *Chief Information Officer*

Mike Ressler, *Director of Operations*

Nancy Walz, *Associate Director of IT Planning*

Dan Sipes, *Associate Director of Administrative Services*

Vern Welder, *Associate Director of Software Development Services*

Dean Glatt, *Associate Director of Computer Services*

Jerry Fossum, *Associate Director of Telecommunication Services*

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North Dakota Information Technology Department

600 East Boulevard Ave Dept 112

Bismarck, ND 58505-0100

(701) 328-3190 FAX: (701) 328-3000

1-800-366-6888 TTY 1-800-366-6889 VOICE

<http://www.state.nd.us/itd/>

Editor:

Becky Lingle

Newsletter Committee:

Darlene Wolfgram

INFORMATION LINK
Information Technology Department
600 E Boulevard Ave Dept 112
Bismarck, ND 58505-0100